

Research Activities Panel

A WORKING GROUP OF THE
CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Monday November 23, 2009
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Draft Meeting Notes

In Attendance:

Steve Katz (CINMS)
Bob Warner (UCSB, RAP Chair)
Chris Mobley (CINMS)
Dani Lipski (CINMS)
Mike Murray (CINMS)
Megan McKenna (SIO & Cascadia Res.)
John Ugoretz (US Navy)
Dan Reed (UCSB, LTER)
Jenn Caselle (UCSB PISCO)
Dave Seigel (UCSB, ICESS)
Jack Engle (UCSB)
Jessie Altstatt (Channel Keeper/Citizen Scientist)
Donna Schroeder (MMS)
Libe Washburn (UCSB)

Public: Paul Petrich, Leslie Abramson

1. Introductions

Bob introduced himself and reviewed the role of the RAP, reminding everyone that it is a public meeting and he will take public comment later on. Bob reviewed the agenda for the day.

Chris Mobley reviewed the budget outlook for 2010 and priorities for NOAA. Chris announced that he expected the budget to remain very tight and that he expects there will be challenges for continuing research and he hopes that the future will present more opportunities.

2. CINMS Announcements

Steve Katz provided a presentation on the Condition Report. Steve reviewed the purpose, process, and content of the report. The report is available at www.noaa.sanctuaries.gov. Steve summarized the RAP review of the report, including criticism of the type of data that was available to make assessments. The RAP review included recommendations for using the report

to set priorities and to support the development of decision support tools. Steve reviewed the survey that CINMS did to characterize the type of information. Steve described how we will use the Condition Report to help use prioritize research needs.

Dani told the group she can provide copies or links to the report and expresses gratitude to those that contributed.

Bob Warner stated that he was initially skeptical of the report but that he was pleased with the analysis of the report that Steve had presented.

A brief discussion followed focused on the data used and development of the report.

3. CINMS Operating Plan 2010

Steve reviewed the days-at-sea completed in 2009. He reviewed the process for requesting time for 2010. Steve listed these priorities for allocating boat time in 2010:

- 1) Does the activity maintain continuity of a time series research project?
 - In evaluating the costs of research, the lost opportunity costs of gaps in a time series are significant. The costs for re-starting a project at the conclusion of a hiatus are high, but the costs of lost time series data that can not be recovered at a later date should funding be renewed is infinite.
- 2) Does the activity addresses a core sanctuary need as defined in the CINMS research department foundation documents that include:
 - CINMS Management Plan
 - CINMS Condition Report
 - CINMS Research Needs Assessment.
- 3) Does the activity occur inside vs. outside sanctuary?
 - The CINMS receives base funds to manage this domain within its borders so projects occurring within the boundaries of CINMS will receive priority. Having said that, recognition of the connectedness of marine resources-e.g. propagation of sound, current-based transport of larvae and pollutants- makes it of interest to support research that is in areas adjacent to the CINMS domain.
- 4) Does the project have funds available to pay your own way?
 - The limit to operations in 2010 is believed to be based on available funds rather than an upper limit to safe operations of the r/v Shearwater. Therefore, if funds are available, the vessel can be made available for days at sea beyond what CINMS can cover with base operations.
- 5) Does the project have access to an alternate vessel?
 - In an effort to service the needs of the research community as a whole – rather than single partnerships one at a time – we will factor the availability of alternate vessels, exploitation of which could maximize the total amount of work done within CINMS. For example, in past years it has proven more cost effective to provide funds to charter other vessels, rather than days at sea aboard Shearwater in those cases where alternate vessels were available. More recently, limited funding forces us to prioritize maximizing the total project days at sea over

servicing a partnership with days aboard Shearwater – where the CINMS contribution to the partnership was days at sea for a partner who had access to other vessels.

- 6) Is this research activity near an end point that days aboard Shearwater will allow to reach completion?
 - If there are projects that otherwise might rate low priority, but with a small number of vessel days can achieve completion, then we will prioritize those projects somewhat higher.

4. **Public Comments**

No Comment

5. **Roundtable**

PISCO - Jenn Caselle announced that PISCO took a significant hit. They will have funding for 2 more years at 1/3 level and money has strings attached that the work must relate to MLPA (new MPAs as a result of MLPA process). Historically have three priorities: physical oceanography (instruments on moorings), recruitment (SMURF modules on moorings), subtidal community (SCUBA surveys). In 2010, PISCO will only be able to pursue subtidal community research, no recruitment research and reduced oceanography. For oceanography, PISCO will be able retrieve equipment and download data, but not complete analysis. For subtidal communities, they will reduce sites from 40 to 10 sites and will shift effort to the mainland, about 15-20 sites. SBI has been dropped already. SRI and SCI that have intermittent data will be dropped. Areas with longer time series will be prioritized. Need from sanctuary: Shearwater for 2 projects (oceanography, subtidal community surveys). The R/V Garibaldi (DFG vessel) is a potential alternative vessel, but needs 40K repair, but they do have operating money.

Plumes & Blooms - Dave Siegel has 1.5 years of funding in place. Next year they will write renewal proposal. That call will be 20% less. Last week's comparison study was successful. They support a variety of other projects during plumes and blooms cruise, including a domoic acid study, and some Ocean Acidification (OA) sampling. Need from sanctuary: need ship time. If SW not available: will end program. Also, they are developing techniques to map kelp from satellite imagery. They will have a complete 20 year dataset by the end of next year.

Coastal Kelp Forrest LTER - Dan Reed does most of his work on the mainland with 2 sites on SCI – the sites are near Hazards and are Russ Schmidt and Sally Holbrook's old sites. This constitutes a 26-28 year dataset. The program consists of monthly water sampling, creek sampling, reef community surveys at 9 sites from Hollister to Carpinteria community monitoring. Dan also reported that they used to do UNOLS cruises across the channel but do not do them any longer. He has no plans to change LTER moorings.

Other moorings have been reconfigured to retrieve less frequently and to sample at a lower resolution.

PISCO & Physical Oceanography - Libe Washburn reported on 4 moorings in Channel and real time sampling on Stearn's Wharf, domoic acid sampling from Gaviota, Stearns, Goleta. Surface currents with high freq radar. He would like SW for antennae calibrations. Funding by CCC and NOAA. He hopes to keep 4 moorings (current meters) going because El Nino is expected this year, but his is concerned about the ability to keep these going. Libe has an overview paper that summarizes findings in preparation. He would like to establish sites for OA. For surface currents work, he hopes to get through 2010.

Scripps Institution of Oceanography & Cascadia Research - Megan McKenna reported that for the long term acoustic monitoring they are scaling back in 2010. They will pull out 2 sites and leave 2 long term sites of HARPs. They need Shearwater for 2 days 4 times a year for 8 days total. They have funding from the Navy. If Shearwater days are not available, these acoustic monitors will be removed from the CINMS vicinity.

Megan reported that they are continuing to monitor AIS. They are also continuing to look at whale distribution with John Calambokidis: surveying shipping lanes, sonar data, and working with tagging boat. This past year, they were able to work with SW and tagged 3 whales within 200m of an oncoming ship.

Minerals Management Service - Donna Schroeder announced that MMS has allocated money for projects adjacent to the sanctuary rather than inside. MMS is paying USGS to complete mapping in the west channel. At that point all fed waters would be mapped in the channel. In 2011 allocated funding for deep water surveys using the Delta sub, primarily around the platforms. Then will fund synthesis of that work. MMS will survey reference sites when time allows - Footprint and Point Conception. Anacapa Passage Reef is another high priority area that will be funded for the next 2 years. MMS is continuing to fund MARINE for 5 more years. They are partnering with USGS to tag otters because of vulnerability to oil spills. They are seen around natural seeps and do not appear to be harmed so tagging would help find out how they are avoiding oiling. MMS is also funding chemical signatures of natural seeps and tar. This could provide some information about oceanography. For example some tar found at Monterey Bay came from Santa Barbara Channel. MMS is partnering with USGS to look at habitat mapping in shallower waters and geology, and rockfish recruitment. Sampling would occur in 2011. In 2010 they plan to organize geology and habitat mapping. Projects not dependent on sanctuary vessel, but could be opportunities to leverage resources. They have an ongoing project on water quality looking at heavy metals in fish tissue. In the past, they looked at platforms and reference sites, one of which was at SCI (Coches Point). They sampled for 40 different metals. Kelp rockfish had high levels of heavy metal. It is possible that it was a result of geology at sampling site. The sampling was unable to detect PAHs in fish but they did find some near natural seeps. In the future, they are considering using passive samplers rather than looking at fish.

UCSB research by Jack Engle – Subtidal work funded through Tatman and they have had cutbacks. They will decide in mid December what their level of support can be (none to little). But they do have ship time on Cormorant. Survey rock site at ACI is a key site – 27 years (and data that goes even further back from Mark Neushell). Site is urchin dominated, permanent transects. Jack reported that it is the highest priority to keep that going and would be a 3-5 day effort to complete that. If he could continue that site, it could be combined with eelgrass monitoring, so they could continue to monitor eelgrass if ACI work is possible. Jack is also tracking Sargassum horneri. There is a 3 day cruise on Cormorant coming up to look at ACI and SCI for Sargassum. Jack would like to do more on invasive seaweed and has some flyers and datasheets to distribute. This could be an opportunity to use long term datasets, and to monitor the spread.

Jack also reported that Southern California Eelgrass Monitoring Regional Program coordinated by SCCWRP and focused mainly on mainland but does include islands. The report is available in draft now but should be final by end of year. The project is looking for ways to standardize sampling.

Jack has applied for NFWF funding from National MPA program to re-survey ASBS sites at the islands. This is a 1 year study that would begin in May and would be a broader level reconnaissance for species lists. He expects to cover this project with Cormorant ship time along with other partners. Need from CINMS: Ship time for eelgrass and Sargassum, if Cormorant is not available. Responding to comments by Donna Schroeder, Jack reported that MARINE has been working with NOAA mussel watch – 3 sites in sanctuary. 2010 is next cycle of sampling (every 2 years). Sampling may be revised because of changing priorities, including sampling for emerging contaminants.

Channel Keeper - Jessie Altstatt – Channelkeeper had 8 days of time for eelgrass monitoring and mapping in 2009. As a citizen scientist, she will be working with Jack Engle to try to continue work on Cormorant or Shearwater. She anticipates producing a report on eelgrass work in the next few months.

US Navy - John Ugoretz – DFG did not fund 2009 kelp overflights but Navy is interested in funding San Nicolas and San Clemente through same contractor. Kelp mapping of the whole SoCal bight is 40K, San Nicolas only is 4K. DFG is not likely to fund it next year either. [Dan Reed: Landsat data has a good correlation and is done 6x a year.] At San Nicolas, they are likely to start MARINE-like sampling in the intertidal. John has contracted Peter Raimondi to do 1 marine biodiversity site. They expect to do more sampling for ASBS. His office is doing a revised management plan to include ocean out to shallow depth, probably including shallow subtidal monitoring. John would like to have consistent sampling with PISCO or CRANE. They Navy does not have vessel assets to offer. There were diverse discussions about other sampling efforts at navy islands.

Steve K reports on some people who could not be here:

TNC & MARE - Dirk Rosen will not be doing the ROV project at CINMS this year due to DFG concentrating efforts on the mainland and TNC funding. However, there is possible funding available for symposium on deep water technology in late 2010.

CINMS - Steve Katz reports on CINMS activities:

- Nutrient inputs at SBI from Sea Lion Rookery.
 - Animal movement projects
Both are funded for activities, but not vessel time and both are on hold until further notice.
 - Whale tagging project with Megan and John Calambokidis. Part of project examines ship strike issue with funding from NMFS. Project continues until next year with small amount of funding.
- Official plan, as per CINMS annual operations plan, is to not have field operations next year.

Question from the public about red abalone project – John Ugoretz responds that they did a smaller survey this year. There was some discussion about abalone advisory group activity and proposed plans. More detailed discussion of alternatives was beyond the scope of the RAP at this time.

6. Closing discussions

Bob said the best opportunity for planning is to discuss opportunities for collaboration and sharing assets. The expectations for collaboration are based on the recognition of assets going to the islands. There is a presumption that individuals involved in work out there are working to common goals, and this may or may not be true. There are good reasons why people will want to send divers to places that don't service the research needs of their neighbors. The opportunities for collaboration, however, are based on the ability of resources to do multiple duties. This also turns out to be more challenging than simply piling dive teams on the Shearwater at the same time as a CTD rosette. Whether economies can be improved by coordinating research activities may or may not be possible, but for certain a prerequisite is knowledge of what others are doing. This was the point of the roundtable discussion at this meeting of the RAP, and CINMS will maintain this information and build on it as opportunities present themselves.